

Information for Patients Receiving Radiation Therapy: Cystitis

What is cystitis?

Cystitis is an irritation and inflammation of the bladder lining.

Who gets cystitis?

Cystitis is a common side effect when radiation treatment is given to the pelvis.

How do I know if I have cystitis?

A person with cystitis may have some or all of these symptoms:

- Difficulty passing urine, or passing frequent, small amounts of urine.
- Feeling like your bladder is not completely empty.
- Burning or pain when emptying bladder.
- Sudden need to empty your bladder.
- Small amounts of blood in the urine.

When can cystitis happen?

Cystitis may occur a few weeks into treatment. It usually disappears a few weeks after the treatment is completed.

What should I do if I think I have cystitis?

Speak with a member of your radiation treatment team if you have any of the symptoms of cystitis. Your Radiation Oncologist may prescribe some medication to help you. If you are unable to pass urine, or if your urine has more than a small amount of blood, you should seek urgent medical care.

The following may help to reduce your problems with cystitis:

- Drink 8-10 glasses of water a day to flush out the bladder and reduce the chance of infection. The best choice of fluids is water.
- We suggest you limit fluid intake after supper.

- The following may worsen your symptoms:
 - › alcohol
 - › carbonated beverages
 - › coffee
 - › cranberry juice
 - › smoking
 - › spicy foods
 - › tea
 - › tomatoes
- You may be asked to provide a sample of urine in order to rule out an infection. If you do get a bladder infection while on treatment, you will be given antibiotics to treat it.

Questions you may want to ask your Health Care Team

- Is my radiation treatment likely to cause cystitis?
- Is there anything I can do to prevent getting cystitis?
- Are there any diet or life style changes that will reduce the symptoms of cystitis?

Patient and family feedback is very important to us.

We would like to invite you to send any comments or suggestions on how to improve this booklet to education.cancercare@nshealth.ca or feel free to call us at 1-866-599-2267.

Prepared by: Nova Scotia Health Cancer Care Program

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If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.